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NSC BRIEFING

11 February 1954

INDOCHINA MILITARY SITUATION

I. Luang Prabang sector of north Laos.

- A. VM 308 Div now about        miles north of royal capital.
- B.  312th Div moving from Dien Bien Phu either to reinforce 308 or to attack Plaine des Jarres. French have had no contact of any type with 312 for almost a week.
- C. Enemy unit nearest Luang Prabang is one battalion, formerly at Sam Neua but now about 10 miles north-east of city.
- D. French now airlifting unannounced number of units to Luang Prabang to supplement 14 bns already there.
- E. French thus far have made only delaying action on approaches to city. Plan is to fall back gradually, give garrison time to prepare defenses.

II. Dien Bien Phu sector.

- A. Viet Minh lobbing 75mm artillery shells and mortar fire against airfield and defensive positions.
- B. Three transport planes damaged on field by this fire; French fliers drawing much AA machinegun fire.
- C. French reconnaissance-in-force on 7 Feb engaged enemy several miles to northeast; met withering machinegun fire and withdrew.

DIA review(s) completed.

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III. Tonkin delta

- A. VM taking advantage of reduced French strength and stepping up harassing attacks and sabotage. Cogny told O'Daniel on 2 February that VM regular bns in delta total 20; however, our total received from army attaché is 14.
- B. During past week, 11 posts attacked, three C-47 planes destroyed, and 200,000 liters gasoline blown up.
- C. High French officer recently told army attaché that situation in delta is "rotten," and that he did not believe military victory there possible.

IV. Other areas.

- A. In central Laos, French continuing reconnaissance in Thakhek-Seno area with no significant contact. Enemy harassing lines of communication.
- B. Throughout Laos, VM regional and militia troops, numbering about 3,000, are aiding and preparing way for regulars. Bulk of these troops are highly mobile, poorly equipped, and specialize in guerrilla warfare.
- C. In Annam, increased VM activity is forcing French to abandon several outposts in Pleiku area. French plan to reinforce Pleiku itself with units probably from Seno.

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4. In Cochinchina, total of 44 posts deserted during past two weeks. Defectors total 126, all of whom were security personnel under civilian control. Affected areas, south of Saigon, now returned to Vietnamese army control.

by VIET NAM

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INDOCHINA MILITARY

I. Luang Prabang sector.

- A. 308 Div about 30 miles north.
- B. 312 Div believed entering Laos.
- C. One bn 10 miles NE of Luang Prabang.
- D. French continue reinforcing city.
- E. Delaying action gives garrison time.

II. Dien Bien Phu sector.

- A. VM using arty and mortars; machine gun fire hitting French planes.
- B. French recon to NE.

III. Tonkin delta.

- A. Increased VM harassing; ARMA now states 14 VM reg bns inside.
- B. 3 C-47's destroyed, 200,000 litres gasoline blown, 11 posts attacked.
- C. High French officer says delta situation is "rotten."

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IV. Other Areas.

- A. French reconnaissance central Laos; no significant contacts.
- B. VM regionals, about 3000, active throughout Laos, working with regulars.
- C. Annam: French abandon several posts in plateau area; planning reinforce Pleiku, probably drawing on Seno.
- D. Cochinchina: In two weeks, 44 posts abandoned by security personnel under civilian control. Affected area put under Vietnam army.

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